BOOK REVIEWS

THE WESTERN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE does not review all books sent to it by the publishers. A list of new books received is carried in the Advertising Section.

RESPIRATORY PHYSIOLOGY—Ths Essentials—Second Edition—John B. West, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine and Bioengineering, University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine, La Jolla. The Willams & Wilkins Company, 428 E. Preston St., Baltimore (21202), 1979. 182 pages, $11.50 (paperback).

This second edition paperback is described by the author as being "primarily written as a core course for medical students." With this intent, the author has succeeded in developing a clear and fundamental description of lung physiology. In this regard physicians as well as students will benefit from the author's concise approach. In particular he has carefully chosen effective figures to complement his text. A collection of these figures, in fact, could be put to good use by others who teach pulmonary physiology. In the preface, the author describes the changes from his first edition. He has made key improvements, most notably decreasing the section on ventilation-perfusion relationships. This undoubtedly took restraint, as this is his key field of research interest. Although his section on metabolic functions of the lung has grown, it is still too brief. This relates to the author's admission that his bias is that the "chief business of the lung is gas exchange." Furthermore, this book with its deserved wide appeal to medical students should include a section on the lung's defense system. Interest in environmental and occupational lung disease is burgeoning. A rudimentary section on defense mechanisms is certainly appropriate in this context.

The book begins with basic lung anatomy. The electron micrographs are particularly effective in giving a visual representation of the lung structure and function relationship. Next, his discussion of ventilation includes the basis of ascertaining lung volumes in the pulmonary function laboratory. He describes the two basic methods, gas dilution and body plethysmography. He gives a short description of regional differences in ventilation which is a very useful clinical topic, especially in the intensive care unit setting. His review of diffusion is good. It lacks specific references as to the role of abnormal diffusion as a cause of hypoxia, the "capillary-block controversy." He does make general statements on this issue, however. His discussion of pulmonary blood flow is excellent. He again stresses regional differences which are so clinically important today with the use of PEEP (positive end-expiratory pressure), pulmonary arterial catheters and the like. His review of ventilation-perfusion relationships is the best chapter in the book. This is an area in which the author draws upon his own background both as a researcher and a teacher. It is an area of tremendous clinical interest in terms of abnormal gas exchange. He deals with the mechanics of breathing in a way that clarifies the clinical significance of our newest laboratory techniques: airway resistance, maximal expiratory flow volume curves using air and helium-oxygen-gas mixtures, closing volumes and so forth. His rewritten chapter on control of ventilation is clear. Given his didactic objectives, he carefully avoids confusing detail in this very confusing area of pulmonary physiology.

The chapter on unusual environments is fascinating, especially given the prior review of physiology. However, four paragraphs on polluted atmosphere is too short, especially given the author's comments that "a polluted atmosphere is becoming less and less of an unusual environment." Finally, his chapter on pulmonary function tests is very effective, especially given the physiologic background in the previous chapters. One criticism, however, is that exercise physiology testing is given only five sentences. The author's clear style should have been applied to exercise physiology as well. It is an area that will become more and more important in medicine of the 1980's.

This book accomplishes its stated objectives. It is a lucid and logical description of pulmonary physiology. Anyone who wants to review pulmonary physiology especially as it relates to clinical medicine should read this book.

JEFFREY A. GOLDEN, MD
Assistant Clinical Professor
Department of Medicine
University of California, San Francisco

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THE HUMAN PATIENT—Naomi Remen, MD. Doubleday & Company, Inc., 245 Park Avenue, New York City (10017), 1980. 238 pages, $10.95.

It is not often that one has the privilege of reviewing a book that is destined to become a classic in medicine. *The Human Patient* is such a book. In the freshness of its insight and the practicality of its discussion, it most resembles another classic, *The Doctor, His Patient and the Illness* by Michael Balint, which also reviewed the scope of relationships between health professional and patient/client in a way that expanded the understanding of both parties in this complex relationship. It surpasses Dr. Balint's book in that it manages, amazingly, to speak equally well to both health professionals and patients. It seems to do this by being able to address the human being present in each health professional and the healer present in each patient.

In the introduction, entitled "Science and Human Needs," Dr. Remen states the premise, perhaps the hope, that it is possible for us to take advantage of the benefits of science and technology without sacrificing our human values in the process. The chapter entitled "What's Right With the Patient" illustrates how even in illness, the strengths of individual persons can be supported and discusses the limits and risks of diagnostic labeling. Subsequent chapters practically illustrate how these strengths can be mobilized. Particularly useful is the chapter on "A Healthy Way to Have a Disease," which guides both professional and patient into obtaining the full personal growth and value from an illness experience in a way which supports appropriate medical treatment *and* the life values of the person and families involved.

The myth that humanistically oriented care is too time consuming to ever be practical is carefully dispelled in the chapter on "Clock Time and Life Time." The final chapters on "Free Choice" and "Collaborative Caring" outline the genuine degrees of freedom for both health professional and patient even with the constraints of serious illness and limited family resources.

Dr. Remen draws richly on her experiences as a practicing clinician and an academician experienced in health professional education, as a founding member of the Institute for Humanistic Medicine and in the Collaborative Health Project, which has brought together physicians, nurses and consumers in an effort to identify strategies that mutually support all parties in health care.

The book addresses the broader conceptual issues in